



DOT Biz Journal

The official publication of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

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DOT Small Business Day: Jobs, Infrastructure, and You – Putting America to Work

On November 17, 2011, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) hosted a Small Business Vendor Day which focused on opportunities for small businesses and individuals seeking employment with government staffing firms. The purpose of this event was to connect small businesses and qualified professionals with job opportunities on the federal, state, and local level, while educating small business owners on the resources available to help their business grow.

OSDBU Director Brandon Neal kicked off the event by highlighting some of the recent initiatives undertaken by OSDBU and then introducing U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood who offered opening remarks.

Speaking directly to the 300 plus small business representatives in the audience, Secretary LaHood recognized the important contributions that small businesses make to the overall strength of the nation's economy



Secretary Ray LaHood shares his remarks

and added, “[Y]ou represent America’s great entrepreneurial spirit – the thing that sets us apart as a nation – the idea that if you dream big and work hard, anything is possible. President Obama and his administration are committed to providing you with the tools to write the next great chapter of America’s story.”

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Event attendees listen to speakers

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Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (NY) discusses legislative efforts to support the small business community



George Pierson, CEO of Parsons Brinckerhoff delivers the keynote address

Congresswoman Yvette Clarke of New York gave remarks reaffirming the important role small businesses play in the economy and highlighted some of the legislation she was promoting in Congress to support increased access to government contracts by disadvantaged business enterprises and women and service-disabled-owned small businesses. She also expressed her appreciation to Secretary LaHood and Director Neal for their recent visits to New York to help promote opportunities for the small business community.

George Pierson, President and CEO of Parsons Brinckerhoff, told the audience a small business success story

of how the company started over 100 years ago as a small firm and has grown to over 14,000 employees in 150 offices. He stressed that even a company of this size relies on numerous small businesses as key partners in projects all across the country. Mr. Pierson noted that partnering is a two-way street – while the small businesses gain access to opportunities and experience through subcontracts with larger firms, the large companies are driven to do a better job through the focus and energy that small businesses bring to projects.

Director Neal then closed out the opening session and noted, “[A]s part of the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, we take pride in helping small businesses around the nation reach their professional goals. That’s our focus every day at OSDDBU. We are working with partners in both the government and the private sector to create jobs for today and sustainable economic growth for tomorrow.”

The event offered two workshops: “How to Grow a Small Business” presented by the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) and “Accessing Capital for Small Businesses” presented by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). There was also a jobs-focused networking session that brought together prime contractors with subcontractors, qualified workers from local staffing firms, and small businesses working with government agencies. Small Business Specialists from DOT’s various Operating Administrations were also available to meet one-on-one with participants to discuss federal government contracting opportunities.



OSDBU Director Brandon Neal opens the event with welcome remarks

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces Transit and Rail Grants to Improve Bus and Rail Service in Several States

In late November of 2011, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced several grant awards to improve rail, light rail and bus service to congested areas across the country. These grants, made through the Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will help to improve the public transportation options available to densely populated urban areas. The projects supported by these grants will help to put people back to work and provide for transportation-related small businesses to participate in the contracting opportunities that will be available. Below are brief summaries of the projects; however we urge you to contact the particular state transportation agency to learn more.

U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood Announces \$21 Million to Improve California's Intercity Passenger Rail Service

On November 18, 2011, Secretary LaHood announced \$21 million in FRA grants for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for engineering work to begin on three projects for one of the nation's most popular passenger corridors: Southern California's Pacific Surfliner Corridor.

According to Secretary LaHood, these projects will help relieve congestion and create jobs throughout the region. The three projects, outlined below, will give Californians access to faster, more efficient passenger rail service throughout the state.

- **Pacific Surfliner Corridor in the City of Oceanside:** \$4 million for preliminary engineering and environmental work for the construction of a second main track and replacement of an aging railway bridge over the San Luis Rey River. This project will help alleviate residual train delays in the area, provide on-time performance benefits to intercity passenger trains and will connect two existing sections of double track. *continued on page 5*

Construction Under Way on Houston Transit Expansion

On November 28, 2011, FTA awarded \$900 million from the New Starts Capital Transit Discretionary Grant Program to extend Houston's major light rail system by 12 miles. The two projects, the North and Southeast lines, are already under construction.

The current project has over 400 workers and an additional 1,800 jobs are expected to be added over the next two years as work on the project progresses.

The funding will improve access to jobs and regional attractions and help reduce pollution and congestion.

These two projects, which are a part of Houston METRO's light rail, will also help with the city's plan to connect the local workforce with downtown employment centers, such as the Texas Medical Center and the University of Houston. The new rail lines are scheduled to open in 2015 and will provide alternatives to congested Interstate 45 and U.S. Route 59. They are expected to carry more than 58,000 riders on weekdays, including more than 13,000 new transit riders a day, by the year 2030.

To learn more about these projects, go to:
www.dot.gov/affairs/2011/fta5811.html

U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood Announces \$275.3 Million for CT's First Bus Rapid Transit System

On November 21, 2011, Secretary LaHood announced \$275.3 million in FTA grants to help build the New Britain-Hartford Busway, Connecticut's first rapid transit bus system. This service will help to relieve congestion, speed commuters along the I-84 corridor and also help create over 4,000 construction-related jobs and 100 permanent jobs in the area. The project will take approximately 2 years to complete.

Riders will be able to board the buses at several stations, and then bypass traffic on I-84 by utilizing exclusive bus lanes along a 9.4-mile abandoned railroad right-of-way to destinations in downtown New Britain and Hartford. The project will offer 11 stations, park and ride connections to other transit services, 31 new clean fuel buses that will serve the nearby communities and connect to Amtrak intercity rail service at Hartford's Union Station.

The grant allows the Connecticut Department of Transportation to begin construction of the bus rapid transit system and supports about half the total cost of the \$567 million project.

For more information, visit
www.dot.gov/affairs/2011/fta5711.html

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OSDBU Welcomes New Participating Lenders

Recently, the Short Term Lending Program (STLP) welcomed two new participating lenders to the program, further expanding the availability of financial services across the country. The STLP helps certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and other certified small businesses working on transportation-related contracts meet their short-term financial goals by providing a revolving line of credit to finance accounts receivable transactions.

In December of 2011, Security Federal Bank of South Carolina and in January of this year, Accion Texas, Inc. joined the list. Security Federal Bank was founded in 1922 in Aiken, South Carolina. They have branches located throughout the counties of Aiken, Lexington and Richland (Metro Columbia), South Carolina and a branch in Columbia County (Metro Augusta), Georgia.

Accion Texas, Inc. was founded in 1994 in San Antonio, Texas to provide vital funding, including working capital, to small businesses that, for various reasons, could not secure it through banks. As a result of its success, it now has ten offices in Texas, four in Louisiana, two in Arkansas and one in Missouri.

For more information on the STLP and a full list of participating lenders, visit: www.osdbu.dot.gov/financial/stlp.cfm

37 States and Territories Receive Reimbursement for Emergency Relief Efforts

On November 18, 2011, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced the availability of approximately \$215 million for states and U.S. territories to assist in paying for the repair of roads and bridges that have been damaged by natural disasters in recent years.

A total of \$215,198,775 from the Federal Highway Administration's emergency relief program will go to 34 states, three U.S. territories and federal lands agencies to reimburse them for repairs to roads and bridges caused by storms, flooding, hurricanes and other natural and catastrophic disasters. Costs associated with detours, debris removal and other immediate measures necessary to restore traffic flow in impacted areas are also eligible.

Among states that will receive funding, California will receive \$43.4 million for repairs needed due to flooding and earthquakes, North Dakota will receive \$31.5 million for repairs needed due to flooding in the Devil's Lake region and Vermont will receive \$15.4 million to repair flood damage from this past year's Tropical Storm Irene.

Although the impact of natural disasters on residents will be felt for years to come, these funds will help to keep businesses open, put people back to work and assist communities in returning to a sense of normalcy. As a result of these emergency relief funds, there will be anticipated opportunities for the small business community to support these rebuilding efforts through contracted projects.

For a complete list of states and territories that will receive funding visit: www.dot.gov/affairs/2011/fhwa6511.html

SECRETARY LAHOOD ANNOUNCES \$21 MILLION TO IMPROVE CALIFORNIA'S INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE...continued from page 3

- **Pacific Surfliner Corridor in the City of Del Mar:** \$7 million for preliminary engineering and environmental work for the construction of a 1.1 mile section of a second main track, replacement of a timber trestle railway bridge built in 1916 and signal improvements. This also includes a permanent seasonal rail platform with access to the Del Mar Fairgrounds, a major trip generator in San Diego County. This project will help alleviate current train delays, increase operational flexibility and improve on-time performance for intercity, commuter and freight operations.
- **Pacific Surfliner Elvira to Morena Double-Track Project:** \$10 million for design, environmental and engineering work. This project will connect two existing track sections, resulting in a 10.3-mile stretch of double track. This is part of the long-range plan to double track the San Diego segment of the corridor which will alleviate train delays, increase operational flexibility, improve on-time performance, and remove a capacity constraint to future intercity passenger rail service on the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Corridor.

For more details visit: www.dot.gov/affairs/2011/fra3511.html

SBA Proposes Increases to Business Size Standards for Several Industry Sectors

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has recently issued proposed rules to increase the small business size standards for a number of industry areas classified in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The proposal includes 15 industries in NAICS Sector 51, Information Services; 20 industries in NAICS Sector 53, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Services; 37 industries in NAICS Sector 56, Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services; and nine industries in NAICS Sector 61, Educational Services.

This effort is part of SBA's ongoing comprehensive review of all industry size standards to ensure that they are accurate and represent the most up-to-date information based upon revenue and employee totals for those specific industries. SBA's methodology for reviewing and modifying the size standards is explained in a White Paper entitled "Size Standards Methodology."

The paper can be downloaded at the following web address: www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/size_standards_methodology.pdf.

Small businesses are encouraged to review the size standard changes in the proposed rules.

For more information on these and other proposed rules regarding the size standard changes, visit: www.sba.gov/content/what%E2%80%99s-new-with-size-standards.

calendar

FEBRUARY 12-14
CIO Transportation Summit
Scottsdale, AZ
www.biztradeshows.com/conferences/cio-transportation-summit/

FEBRUARY 15-17
7th Annual Texas Transportation Forum
San Antonio, TX
www.dot.state.tx.us/ttf/

FEBRUARY 22-23
2012 GRO-Biz Conference and Idea Expo
Laramie, WY
www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=954632

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 1
Reservation Economic Summit & American Indian Business Trade Fair
Las Vegas, NV
<http://res2012.biz/>

MARCH 20-21
Ohio Business Matchmaker Conference
Dayton, OH
www.ohiobusinessmatchmaker.com

MARCH 21-22
Women's Business Enterprise National Council Summit & Salute
Baltimore, MD
www.wbenc.org/summit-salute